

**Ambassador James Zumwalt**  
**Remarks for Access Graduation Ceremony**  
**January 6, 2016**  
**FASTEF Teacher Training Faculty, Dakar**

*(As prepared)*

Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Education  
Dean of FASTEF (Faculté des Sciences et Technologies de l'Education et de la Formation)  
Principals of participating schools  
Parents and teachers  
And especially, *Access* students and *Access* alumni

Assalam aleikoum. Good afternoon.

Those were great performances. Congratulations! Your hard work over the past two years definitely shows.

The English Access Micro-scholarship Program, known as *Access*, is funded by the United States Department of State to help young Senegalese students such as yourselves to improve their English. Through intensive extra-curricular study and language training camps, you have mastered spoken English skills. Thanks to the enthusiasm of Senegalese students, we, expanded our programs and there are now more *Access* students in Senegal than any other country in Africa.

The graduation certificates you will soon receive represent two years of tireless study. Such devotion is evidence of your determination and your thirst for learning. Both the English and your determination will serve you well in your future studies and careers.

However, as I said in French, such a success would not have been possible without your parents' invaluable support. This celebration is theirs, too! And let's not forget the teachers who strove to provide you excellent English language instruction and a deeper understanding of the culture of the United States and the Anglophone speaking world. Thank you parents and teachers!

Finally, I want to thank our *Access* partners - -the Dakar English Language Center, or DELC, and the English Language Institute, or ELI. Thank you Mamadou Boye and Moussa Diouf, for your work with our Embassy, the Ministry, and the schools to shape a successful *Access* program – including organizing today's graduation ceremony. This program would not succeed without you.

English is popular in Senegal for many reasons. Through English, one truly gains “access” to a broader world – the United States, Great Britain, and Anglophone African countries, yes - but also an entire global community that is linked through English. We see this communication in medicine, technology, social media and more. English can open doors in your future careers.

The Access program reaches beyond English language teaching. Learning leadership skills is also an integral part of the program to prepare you to respond to both challenges and opportunities. I hope that you enjoyed these leadership training activities and that you learned something new about yourselves, your abilities and your potential.

I expect that, as a result of your experience, you are now equipped to build a bright future for yourself, but also for your parents, your community, and your nation. We have high expectations for you but we also know from the determination you have shown during these two past years that you are ready.

You are now members of the larger “Alumni” family, and I encourage you to join other Access alumni. Visit our “Alumni” website to exchange ideas with other alumni of U.S. Government programs. You will discover other opportunities that may help you on your future path. Make the most of what you have acquired during these two years, share what you have learned with your community and be good ambassadors of the English Access Microscholarship Program! Congratulations on your achievements, I wish you the best.

*Diereudieuf.*